

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 228952 TOSEC 270189

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FOR EAGLEBURGER FROM MCMANAWAY AND AHERNE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: GELB ARTICLE ON PA-SPONSORED "TOWN MEETINGS"

1. BROWN LEARNED TODAY THAT GELB WILL HAVE AN ARTICLE IN TOMORROW'S TIMES BASED ON THE FIVE BRIEFING MEMORANDA TO THE SECRETARY REPORTING THE RESULTS OF THE PA-SPONSORED TOWN MEETINGS IN PITTSBURGH, PORTLAND, MINNEAPOLIS, SAN FRANCISCO AND MILWAUKEE (THE REPORTS TOTAL ABOUT 50 PAGES. WE ARE CABLING YOU SEPARATELY TEXTS OF PORTLAND AND PITTSBURGH MEMORANDA WHICH WE UNDERSTAND ARE THE FOCUS OF GELB'S ATTENTION. THE OTHER THREE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR IMMEDIATE TRANSMISSION SHOULD YOU WANT THEM.)

2. THESE REPORTS ARE UNCLASSIFIED AND HAD, IN FACT, BEEN DISTRIBUTED AFTER THE FACT BY PA TO SEVERAL HUNDRED PARTICIPANTS IN TOWN MEETING EVENTS IN THE FIVE CITIES. GELB SAID HE HAD GOTTEN THE FIVE DOCUMENTS FROM "AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL WHO WISHED TO HELP JIMMY CARTER IN HIS QUEST FOR THE PRESIDENCY." THE SOURCE, ACCORDING TO
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GELB, FELT THAT CARTER'S CHARGES ABOUT MORALITY IN

FOREIGN POLICY WERE WELL-FOUNDED, AND THAT PUBLICITY ABOUT THE REPORTS WOULD PROVE THAT SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAD BEEN HEARING THE SAME THEME AROUND THE COUNTRY.

3. WE WILL CABLE THE GELB TEXT AS SOON AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE. IN THE MEANTIME, WE UNDERSTAND THAT ITS POINT WILL BE THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN HEARING FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AT THESE MEETINGS ESSENTIALLY WHAT CARTER HAS BEEN SAYING, I.E., THAT WE ARE NEGLECTING MORALITY, AMERICAN PRINCIPLES, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SO FORTH IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY. AS YOU WILL SEE FROM THE REPORTS THEMSELVES, THAT GENERAL THOUGHT IS OCCASIONALLY EXPRESSED -- BUT IT IS NOT CLEARLY RELATED TO THE SECRETARY, IT IS PROBABLY MORE AN EXPRESSION OF AMERICAN IDEALISM THAN A CRITICISM OF CURRENT POLICY, AND IT IS ONLY ONE OF MANY THEMES, THE OTHERS OF WHICH GELB EVIDENTLY PLANS TO NEGLECT. DEPENDING ON HOW THE ARTICLE ACTUALLY COMES OUT, WE SUGGEST BROWN READ A STATEMENT AT TOMORROW'S BRIEFING; THE FOLLOWING IS INDICATIVE OF THE APPROACH WE BELIEVE WE OUGHT TO TAKE: BEGIN TEXT: THIS IS A TENDENTIOUS AND MISLEADING ARTICLE WHICH BOTH CORRUPTS THE PURPOSES OF THE MEETINGS WE HAVE SPONSORED AROUND THE COUNTRY, AND SEIZES ON ONE OUT-OF-CONTEXT THEME IN THE REPORTS ON THOSE MEETINGS.

4. SECRETARY HAS STRESSED EVER SINCE HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A BROAD BIPARTISAN PUBLIC CONSENSUS IN SUPPORT OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. CONVINCED AS HE IS THAT NO AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY CAN BE ULTIMATELY EFFECTIVE WITHOUT SUCH SUPPORT, HE HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS TIME TRYING TO OUTLINE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE BASES OF OUR POLICY, AND HE HAS DIRECTED THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO DO THE SAME--AS WELL AS TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE TO GAIN SOME SENSE OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND, INDEED, OF PUBLIC CRITICISMS.

5. THE TOWN MEETINGS WERE IN OUR VIEW AN INNOVATIVE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THIS LATTER PURPOSE. THEY HAVE BROUGHT
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FORTH A BROAD PICTURE OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS IN VARIOUS CITIES, AND THE SECRETARY HAS PERSONALLY REVIEWED THE DETAILED REPORTS WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS PREPARED.

6. THERE IS NOTHING SECRET ABOUT THOSE REPORTS. WE HAVE MADE NO EFFORT TO HIDE THEIR CONCLUSIONS. WE HAVE, IN FACT, DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF THE REPORTS TO SEVERAL

HUNDRED TOWN MEETING PARTICIPANTS IN EACH OF THE FIVE

CITIES, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEWS MEDIA IN THOSE AREAS. WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE COPIES OF THE REPORTS AVAILABLE TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES HERE. WE BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WHO CARES TO READ THEM WILL SEE THAT THEY ARE A VALUABLE SERIES OF INPUTS TO THE SECRETARY AND THE DEPARTMENT ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN THIS COUNTRY; THEY ARE, TOO, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE A TOTALLY UNPRECEDENTED EXAMPLE OF INTEREST BY A SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN SUCH PUBLIC ATTITUDES.

7. ANYONE WHO CARES TO READ THEM WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO DRAW HIS OWN CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF THE ARTICLE AND ABOUT MR. GELB'S MOTIVATION IN TRYING TO FIND NEWS IN THE REPORTS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. END TEXT.
ROBINSON

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